FAMILY LIFE

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THE GIFTED CHILD

After several generations of neglect, the gifted child has become "the child of the hour," with attention showered upon him (in theory and on paper, at least) by various interests, each of whom hopes to use him to increase its own prestige and financial appropriations. Of the many books directed to him, one of the most practical is *Common sense about gifted children,* by Willard Abraham, professor of education at Arizona State College (Tempe.)

If we set fire tomorrow to all the coal and oil still underground, you would see headlines a foot high, Dr. Abraham remarks; but difficult as it is to believe, we are even more destructive in hard-headedly ignoring our greatest natural resource of all. Most of our civilization is produced by one percent of the population; and these leaders come, in general, from the ranks of gifted children. It is not easy to find, much less train and utilize, these gifted children unless they can be exposed for a considerable length of time to a satisfactory educational system. It is now admitted that from this point of view our educational system is far from satisfactory; and of the most gifted 25% of all pupils in our high schools, only one-half graduate from college.

At the other end of the scale, it is coming to be recognized that the electronic and atomic age has little place for hordes of men with strong backs and weak minds, and equal numbers of women with defective intellects but great reproductive capacity and proclivity. The Army has recently compained that of its inductees (and it must be remembered that the local boards have already screened out the obviously defective), 25% are smart enough only to dig ditches and scrub floors.

True, there is no generally adopted definition of who is gifted and how he shall be identified; but this semantic question need not prevent constructive action. Dr. Abraham provides interesting illustrations of the wide variety of methods of diagnosis, some depending on measurement of IQ, others ignoring this entirely. There is no simple criterion. He fills three pages of fine print with methods by which parents can recognize superiority in their own offspring. No one of these is final; a balance of many of them is significant. They include such obser-

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vations as:

1. Early maturity, in walking and talking.
2. Interests that are diverse, spontaneous, frequently self-directed and carried through with persistence.
3. Evidence of reasoning power, of ability to express himself, and of ease of learning, all in advance of other children of his age.
4. Superior moral character and emotional stability.
5. Prefers the companionship of older children.
6. Likes school but may become bored and disgusted with stupid teachers and lockstep progress.
7. Shows a high degree of originality in his play, work, planning, and adjustment to situations.

Dr. Abraham outlines, in a couple of hundred pages, the many needs for meeting them. "Now," he concludes, "let's attempt to pull the threads together in a single plan that could be put into effect before each of us is even a year older. Although we need immediate attention to the gifted child on all educational levels, where should we begin? If one level were to be chosen (and that choice certainly does not preclude activity on other levels as well), it is the *secondary school* that is crying for help most desperately. Nursery schools in general give the most complete individualized attention based on a child's need; elementary schools have made the start as changing practices in school systems all over the country testify; colleges are the slowest to change and will do so only if the institutions that feed them pave the way. Thus by a process of elimination the secondary school becomes the obvious focal point for special and immediate treatment. Besides, these are the students whose needs we must hurry to meet before we have lost them for good. Here is a six-fold plan for getting the job done:

1. Industry must be willing to lend some of its key personnel to secondary schools.
2. In order to become teachers these men and women will need some intensive training in the skills of teaching; this can be speeded up, condensed, and adapted to their individual abilities.
3. In each city of more than 100,000 a high school should be designated for gifted students.
4. With precise organizing, this master plan on the secondary level can be put into operation all over the country at the same moment.
5. As soon as this plan is in operation, another step must be taken—setting up a national university, with branches in various parts of the country, where our best qualified young people from these high schools can be prepared for their life work in the broadest sense possible. We must recongnize at the start that they are capable of far more than many of the lesser qualified institutions of higher learning, and the instructors in them, are now providing. (Various surveys have shown that the great state universities, for instance, are providing far less than their quota of outstanding

leadership in science from their graduates. Nevertheless, this part of Dr. Abraham's program will certainly bring a roar of protest from the universities who usually take the view that all the nation needs is to give them more money.)

6. The last proposal is for a non-partisan committee of men and women of good will, from industry and education, to set up and guide the whole project.

That some such radical and far-reaching program is necessary, is suggested by the fact that there are now only two colleges and universities which offer full sequences of courses to help prepare teachers of gifted children, while there are 122 that give such preparation for teachers of "exceptional children,"—a term which is now understood to mean the mentally defective, those with speech and hearing difficulties, and the like; and that only one state certifies teachers of gifted children while 22 certify teachers of the mentally retarded. Dr. Abraham could not discover any state that has a full-time person in its department of education, devoted to the education of the gifted; nor could he find one faculty member in any college or university who was devoting full time to the subject. Perhaps he is right in thinking that the inertia and tradition of the whole present educational system is too great to be overcome, and that we will have to make a fresh start. At any rate, he has offered a comprehensive, fact-loaded, and stimulating survey of the whole subject, in most readable fashion.

(COMMON SENSE ABOUT GIFTED CHILDREN, by Willard Abraham. Pp. 268, price $5 from Harper & Bros., 49 E. 33d st., New York 16, N.Y., 1958.)

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Inexpensive Pamphlets

HELPING YOUR CHILD TO UNDERSTAND DEATH, pp. 64, price 60c from Child Study Assn. of America, 132 E. 74th st., New York 21, N.Y.

BETTER HUMAN RELATIONS, by Lucy Freeman, pp. 28, price 25c from Council on Social Work Education, 345 E. 46th st., New York 17, N.Y.—To recruit students for education in social work.

YOUR CHILDREN'S FEET AND FOOTWEAR, pp. 13, price 10c from Supt. of Documents, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C. (Catalog No. FS 3.210:41/2.)

SOME GOOD BOOKS FOR PARENTS, 1958, leaflet free on request to Service Dept.of the Board of Education, P.O. Box 871, Nashville, Tenn.

WHAT PTA MEMBERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, a guide for action, pp. 96, price 50c from Nat'l Congress of Parents and Teachers, 700 N. Rush st., Chicago 11, Ill.

THE NEED FOR PARENTAL COUNSELING IN PEDIATRICS, by Joseph Warkany. Pp. 4, price 25c from American Eugenics Society, 230 Park ave., New York 17, N.Y.

SHALL I BREAST FEED MY BABY? by Niles Newton, leaflet free on application to Mildred Hatch, 8 Pine St., Saint Johnsbury, Vt., who also has a lending library (free except for payment of postage) of books for expectant and new parents; write her for list.

SOCIAL CLASS AND MENTAL ILLNESS

Mental health requires radical reorganization of present facilities in the United States, in the opinion of a sociologist and a psychiatrist who have been studying intensively the conditions that exist in one community, New Haven, Conn. The people who most need help get the least and the poorest help. The difficulty can be met only by a great increase in the number of persons qualified to give some help, and this number can not be supplied by any possible increase in the ranks of specialists.

In their book, *Social class and mental illness,* August B. Hollingshead and Frederick C. Redlich find, as others have thought, that the prevalence of mental illness is much greater among the "lower" socio-economic-educational levels than in the "higher." Yet these lower income groups do not have access to psychiatrists in private practice or, at best, are turned over to the relatively untrained and perhaps unskilled practitioners, and frequently dropped in a short time; the psychiatrists, who come from higher classes, dislike these patients. If the patient gets into a public hospital he is likely to be pushed off into a back ward and left to die there, because no one wants to bother with him and even his family is not interested in his return. Yet evidence shows that a large part of these chronic cases could be largely rehabilitated,--as in fact they are if they are fortunate enough to belong to the upper classes.

All this, the authors insist, is quite out of line with the accepted creed of American culture,—or indeed of common humanitarianism and decency. But where is a solution to be found? Certainly not by training enough psychoanalysts, at a cost of $50,000 each, to meet the need, even if they were capable of doing so; and the authors point out that little is known about the actual success of psychanalytic or other psychiatric treatment. Some help may had from chemical treatments—"tranquilizers," but it is optimistic to suppose that such treatments hold the answer to all problems of mental health.

Further use may be made of group therapy, although for this purpose "important innovations" will be necessary; "principles of supportive, manipulative, and suggestive techniques will have to be understood better." But the primary need is for more therapists: "some might be in the field of medicine such as internists dealing with psychosomatic problems or pediatricians dealing with emotional problems of children. Others might be in clinical psychology or social work, or in educational, occupational, or pastoral, counseling. As long as these counselors, and with some courage we might call them therapists, are well trained and do not dabble in fields beyond their training, there should be no meaningful objection to such a venture.

"To be sure, therapy, at least since the days of pure magic, has been the prerogative of the medical profession, but why should a non-medical problem, such as emotional re-education in work and family life, remain in the domain pre-empted by the medical profession? Why should we not train a new professional specialist? A large part of the subject matter and experience in traditional medical training is superfluous and expensive for someone limited to

psychotherapy notably in non-medical problems. Therapies which demand basic medical knowledge should remain the prerogative of the medical profession, but outside of this medical orbit, psychiatrists and medical analysts have little right to block attempts to train an adequate number of therapists to do the job our society needs. The public would get used to such a profession, and the profession, in due time, would develop the sense of responsibility and regard for human welfare and dignity which have rewarded the medical profession with such high prestige in our society.

"The profession of social work has come closest to the ideals and tasks of such a profession; some social workers, in a way, have functioned as 'lower class psychiatrists' for some time although they, in their loyalty to psychiatrist and medical psychoanalysis, like to deny such a role. Possibly, out of the professions of medicine, social work, psychology, and sociology, a new discipline providing us with the needed therapists might emerge. Such a profession might help us solve the *urgent* need for good psychotherapy in Classes IV and VI" (i.e., the lower groups.)

The authors are of course quite incorrect in asserting that, since the days of magic, "therapy has been the prerogative of the medical profession." The clergy have been, during most of this period, far more important than the medics; and today the more than a quarter of a million clergymen in the United States are doing far more in quantity in this field than all the medical men, psychologists, and social workers put together; and they are constantly getting better training and more experience. Not every clergyman is qualified for such work, however, by temperament, interest, or time available, any more than is every physician or psychologist. Meanwhile other groups are not to be overlooked: thus the National YMCA has the slogan, "Every secretary a counselor," and an immense amount of counseling is being done by men and women in the field of education, of youth organizations, probation work, and the like.

Dr. Hollingshead is professor of sociology in the graduate school at Yale University, Dr. Redlich chairman of the department of psychiatry of the Yale school of medicine. Their investigation was confined to New Haven and they point out that separate studies must be made in other parts of the country; but New Haven is a prosperous and enlightened community and it is likely that conditions in many other parts of the country are far worse, rather than better, than the extremely unsatisfactory ones they describe. Their solid and richly-documented book should be another stimulus to improvement in the nation's mental health picture, resulting in a vastly larger number of individuals able to give aid to their fellow-men and, they also predict, "the present type of mental hospital is likely to become an historical anachronism just as the medieval asylum and the debtors' prison have passed into disuse. The present institution with its back wards of paupers and unwanted people should disappear." This will all require money; but it will also require determination. "Science can provide the tools, but only people can translate dissatisfaction with a state of affairs into action."

(SOCIAL CLASS AND MENTAL ILLNESS, by August B. Hollingshead and Frederick C. Redlich. Pp. 442, price $7.50 from John Wiley and Sons, 440

Fourth ave., New York 16, N. Y., 1958.)

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Educational Notes

THE POPULATION COUNCIL (230 Park ave., New York 17, N.Y.) looks back over five years of operation, in its annual report for 1957. Expenditures (mainly from Ford and Rockefeller contributions) totaled $776,697.26 last year. It is concerned with problems of demography and with research to find better methods of contraception. President is Frederick Osborn.

SIXTH ANNUAL Family Life Education Workshop will be held at the College of the Pacific, Stockton, Calif., June 23 - July 3. It is co-sponsored by the California Congress of Parents and Teachers.

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Research Notes

NICOTINE administered to pregnant mice was found to produce abnormal embryos in as many as 60% of experiments, by Hideo Nishimura and Kazuo Nakai. (*Science,* April 18, 1958.)

SURVEY of 16,183 Philadelphia high school girls reported dysmenorrhea as frequent in 30.2%, occasional in 37.4%, and absent in 32.4%. It was commonest among Negroes. (L.J. Golub et al. in *Postgraduate Medicine,* Jan., 1958.)

FAMILY STRESSES showed an interesting association with positive cultures of streptococcus, in children studied in Oklahoma by W. W. Schottstaedt and co-workers. "The father seemed to be the decisive figure . . . children who were most insecure in their relations with him showed a higher incidence of positive cultures when he was demanding or irritable." (*American Journal of Medical Sciences,* Jan., 1958,)

ENGLISH WOMEN with the highest academic success in their college careers also tend to have the most children, according to a survey by Mrs. Judith Hubback, published in a book called *Wives who went to college* (London, Heinemann, 1957.) All but 1% of the graduate wives agreed that their university education had been valuable to them and that, given their lives again, they would again choose to go to a university.

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Around the World

ISRAEL'S GOVERNMENT is studying amendment of its divorce laws, which now follow Old Testament prescriptions and rabbinical tradition. There is widespread complaint that the rights of wives are not recognized adequately.

HUNGARY'S GOVERNMENT has issued 300,000 pamphlets on methods of contraception. Ostensible reason is to combat increasing abortion.

"TODAY more than one billion people live in countries whose governments are actively promoting birth control," said William Vogt, director of the planned Parenthood Federation, in the Institute's bulletin. "This situation was unthinkable as recently as five years ago . . . The proportion of the world's population whose governments espouse family planning programs undoubtedly will increase."

CONGRESS OF THE FAMILY, representing the important national organizations in this field in Argentina, met in Buenos Aires and adopted a Charter of the Family, insisting among other points on "the spiritual, moral, legal, economic, and social unity of the family," and lower inheritance taxes.

NEW BOOKS IN BRIEF REVIEW

RELAX YOUR WAY TO HEALTH, by M. H. Soglow. Pp. 208, price $4.95 from Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1958.

No one questions the value of systematic relaxation and, indeed, the great need for it in modern life. But many of the books that treat of it have prescribed prolonged practice under the direction and personal supervision of a physician, for several months on end. Certainly few persons are able, financially or otherwise, to complete a schedule. Mr. Soglow's field is physical education, but he has devoted much of his lifetime to teaching relaxation, along with a simple and practical schedule of living that makes for mental health. This book will be more useful to the average nervously-tired person, than the complicated and difficult exercises required by some authors —even though these latter exercises may be scientifically sound and useful if anyone could follow through with them.

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YOUR CHILD IS WHAT HE EATS, by Harold D. Lynch. Pp. 188, price $3.75 from Henry Regnery Co., 64 E. Jackson blvd., Chicago, Ill., 1958.

Main theme of his book, says Dr. Lynch, is the need of supplying the child with enough protein. He gives helpful suggestions for simplifying the mother's work, and concludes with one of those extraordinary glossaries that so many M.D.'s seem to think it necessary to provide, which explains that constipation is a "condition characterized by hard stools which are usually difficult to pass"; detergent is "a cleansing agent"; and goes on in similar vein to interpret to the ignorant and eager mother the meaning of such obscure words as fat, feces, hives, and intestine. Dr. Lynch is a pediatrician in private practice in Evansville, Indiana.

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DIRECTORY FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN: educational and training facilities.. Pp. 320, price $6 from Porter Sargent, 11 Beacon st., Boston 8, Mass., 1958.

This third edition of an invaluable handbook represents an enormous amount of work, which is thoroughly justified by the need for such a compilation. It describes and classifies several thousand facilities, public and private, for the handicapped of all types, physical, mental, and social. It will be indispensable to every public library and to every organization and individual who comes in contact with any of these.

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SEX WITHOUT GUILT, by Albert Ellis. Pp. 200 (no index), price $4.95 from Lyle Stewart, 225 Lafayette st., New York 12, N.Y., 1958.

The ever appearing question in the discussion of sex behavior is that of what position one should take between a rigid control by law and mores on the one hand and the greatest individual independence. This book, as one might expect from the author's previous writing (and editing), takes a position farthest towards independence that has yet gotten past the mails (so far as known today). It is interestingly written and culminates in rejection of what are called Seven Myths:

1. That love is mysterious and that no one knows what it is.
2. That there is such a thing as "real" or "true" love.
3. That it is difficult to tell when one is in love.
4. That love and marriage always go together.
5. That one can truly love only one person at a time.
6. That when one loves, one has no sex desires for individuals whom one does not love.
7. That one loves one's beloved steadily or all the time.

Some other dicta are as follows:

P. 96. "We should only punish by law those sex acts which involve the use of force or duress or an adult's taking sexual advantage of a minor or public sex acts which are distasteful to the majority of those in whose presence they are committed. All acts other than these, which are engaged in privately between two competent adults should not be subject to legal penalties."

P. 25. "It is difficult to conceive of a more beneficial, harmless tension-releasing human act than masturbation that is spontaneously performed without (puritanically-inculcated and actually groundless) fears and anxiety." Yet the author does limit the personal independency by writing, "he or she should consider as undesirable or neurotic all sex participations which.

a) cause personal injury (e.g. extreme sexual masochism)

b) are physiologically constricting or maiming (e.g., being the passive dependent partner in a heterosexual or homosexual relationship.

c) are relatively unsatisfactory or uninteresting (e.g., exclusive resort to masturbation when heterosexual activities are available)

d) are largely motivated by anxiety, hostility, or other neurotic feelings rather by honest preference (e.g., compulsive petting used as a substitute for dating).

e) are inimical to non-sexual desires and needs which one considers to be more important than sexual gratification (e.g., having an adulterous affair at the risk of ruining one's happy marital and family life).

But have we not had enough of speculation? What is needed now is thorogoing research on all these disputed points with the best methodology. Partisanship is so great in this field.

—Roswell H. Johnson, Ph.D.

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THE WILL TO LIVE, by Arnold A. Hutschnecker. Pp. 292, price $4.95 from Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1958.

Second and revised edition of a book which first came out in 1951, and which many readers found helpful. Tranquilizers, psychosomatics, and recent discoveries have been added. The new edition will undoubtedly continue the wide popularity of its author, a German-trained physician who has been practising internal medicine in New York City since 1936.

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LONGER LIFE, by George Soule, price $3 from the Viking Press, 625 Madison ave., New York 22, N.Y., 1958.

What our lengthening life span is doing to our economy is described simply and vividly by a popular economist. He protests against what he calls the segregation policy applied to the Senior Citizens, who now make up one-tenth of the nation. Retirement

should not be compulsory at any fixed age, he insists; and the elder-agers should be allowed to earn enough to support themselves, being aided by the government for this purpose when necessary. The seniors must be integrated into the whole population.

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A SEARCH FOR MAN'S SANITY, the selected letters of Trigant Burrow. Pp. 616, price $8:75 from Oxford University Press, 114 Fifth ave., New York 11, N.Y., 1958.

Trigant Burrow (1875-1950) was one of the constructive and provocative pioneers in the field of psychoanalysis. Breaking away from Sigmund Freud, he began to put more emphasis on group relationships and group analysis. Many students found his views hard to understand, and some of the difficulties are apparent in the correspondence, which includes letters to many of the leaders in psychoanalysis as well as philosophers, writers, friends and members of his family. But the final picture that emerges is one of a sensitive and highly interesting personality. The editors should have included a real biography of the man .

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TO GOD THROUGH MARRIAGE, by Gerald J. Schnepp and Alfred F. Schnepp. Pp. 203, paper covers, price $1.48 from Bruce Pub. Co., Milwaukee 1, Wis., 1958.

Directed to adolescent readers, this book is detailed enough to meet the needs of their parents in many instances although the treatment is always simple. Its practical character will recommend it to many readers, especially those of the Roman Catholic religion. Brother Gerald Schnepp is professor of sociology at St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, while Fr. Alfred Schnepp is at Assumption High School, East St. Louis, Ill.

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THE YOUNG EXECUTIVE'S WIFE, by Edith Heal. Pp. 185 (no index) price $2.95 from Dodd, Mead & Co., 432 Fourth ave., New York, N.Y., 1958.

Corporations nowadays are becoming much interested in the wives of their junior executives, and usually interview the wife before they hire the husband. Mrs. Heal prepares the wife for what she has to face at that interview and for the rest of her life. Herself an executive's wife, she is also on the faculty of Fairleigh Dickinson University, Rutherford, N.J. She explains office procedure and protocol, tells the wife how to get along with the boss, how to entertain, how to adjust herself to moves and transfers, and how to have her own "career" while helping her husband.

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AMERICA'S CHILDREN, by Eleanor H. Bernert. Pp. 185, price $6 from John Wiley & Sons, 440 Fourth ave., New York 16, N.Y., 1958.

Detailed analysis of figures from the U.S. Census of 1950, with special reference to the social and economic factors affecting children and youth. With its tables and appendices, it is a valuable reference work for anyone concerned with this field. Dr. Bernert is now a research associate at the University of Southern California.

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GROWING UP TOGETHER, ed. by Eugene S. S. Geissler. Pp. 213 (no index,) price $3.95 from Fides Publishers, 744 E. 79th st., Chicago 19, Ill., 1958.

Essays by nine writers, most of whom have good-sized families,—the

editor himself is the father of 11 children. All insist on the responsibility of the parents, which can not be transferred to anyone else, including the State. They include such important phases of development as growing up socially, artistically, respectfully, musically, spiritually, and liturgically.

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PROGRESS IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY, Vol. II ed. by Daniel Brower and Lawrence E. Abt. Pp. 364, price $7.75 from Grune & Stratton, 381 Fourth ave., New York 16, N.Y., 1956.

Specialists offer 22 reviews of progress in their fields. Of great interest to the psychologist, the book will have less value for the marriage counselor and family life educator.

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FINDING AND USING YOUR MAGIC EMOTION POWER, by Eugene J. Benge. Pp. 187, price $4.95 from Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1958.

Readable and usable book of the "inspirational" type, but with plenty of practical applications.

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SO YOU'RE IN HIGH SCHOOL, by Mary F. Detjen and Ervin W. Detjen. Pp. 126, price $2.75 from McGraw-Hill Book Co., 330 W. 42d st., New York 36, N.Y., 1958.

Practical advice offered to boys and girls by the principal of a Louisville, Ky., high school and his wife, who is guidance counselor in another high school.

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INTRODUCTORY SOCIOLOGY, by Paul H. Landis. Pp. 726, price $6.50 from the Ronald Press Co., 15 E. 26th st., New York 10, N.Y., 1958.

College textbook by an author who is well-known for his research and writings on family life.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY, by S. Stansfeld Sargent and Robert C. Williamson. Pp. 649, price $6 from the Ronald Press Co., 15 E. 26th St., New York 10, N.Y., 1958.

Second edition of a standard college textbook first published in 1950. It deals with "an exciting area of social science," as the authors well say; but they also point out that the subject has grown piecemeal without much consistent organization. They give a score or two of their pages to the family. Dr. Sargent is a clinical psychologist in Phoenix, Ariz.; Dr. Williamson on the faculty of Los Angeles City College.

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THE ART OF DATING, by Evelyn Millis Duvall. Pp. 254, price $2.50 from Association Press, 291 Broadway, New York 7, N.Y., 1958.

One of the best known writers in the field of family relations contributes this book to teen-agers with the collaboration of her daughter, Joy Duvall Johnson. It takes them from "Are you ready to date?" to final chapters on sexual relations before marriage and on getting married. It should prove to be a welcome and helpful gift to anyone in the adolescent age group; and parents might derive much-needed guidance from it, too.

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THE PRESCHOOL YEARS, 62-p. booklet from N.Y. State Dept. of Health, available to those outside of the state for 60c from Mental Health Materials Center, 1790 Broadway, New York 19, N.Y.

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GROUP LEADERSHIP IN STAFF TRAINING, by Eileen A. Blackey, pp. 182, Children's Bureau Publication No. 361—1957, price 55c from Supt. of Documents, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C.

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